

Case 2933

***Eudistoma* Caullery, 1909 (Tunicata): proposed precedence over
Paessleria Michaelsen, 1907**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to give precedence to the tunicate (family POLYCITORIDAE) generic name *Eudistoma* Caullery, 1909 over the almost unused senior subjective synonym *Paessleria* Michaelsen, 1907. At least 75 species are placed in *Eudistoma*; it is possible that *Paessleria* might in future be appropriate for a subgenus containing its type species *P. magalhaensis* and some other *Eudistoma* species.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Tunicata; Ascidiacea; *Eudistoma*; *Paessleria*.

1. Savigny (1816) originally included two nominal species in his genus *Distoma* (p. 176), one of them being *D. rubrum* (p. 177). The name *Distoma* subsequently became applied to a diverse group of tunicates which have more recently been referred to several genera in the families HOLOZOIDAE and POLYCITORIDAE. Caullery (1909, p. 42) regarded *Distoma* as a junior synonym of *Polycitor* Renier, [1804], but on the grounds of the then usage and the obscurity of Renier's work he retained *Distoma* as a valid name. Many years later the Commission rejected (Opinions 316, 427) the work by Renier in which *Polycitor* appeared as not having been properly published, but in 1957 (Opinion 478) this by then widely used generic name was conserved. Caullery (1909, p. 44) divided *Distoma* into the two subgenera *Eudistoma* and *Paradistoma*, without designating a type species for either; the failure to use the name *Distoma* for one of the subgenera was contrary to both the then current Rules and the modern Code, but in any event *Distoma* Savigny is a junior homonym of *Distoma* Retzius, 1786. It has not been used for many years.

2. In Opinion 478 the Commission designated *P. crystallinus* Renier, [1804] as the type species of *Polycitor*, in accordance with usage and with previous designations. This species had been placed by Harant (1929, p. 40) in Caullery's subgenus *Paradistoma*, and as a junior subjective synonym of *Polycitor* there has been no subsequent valid use of *Paradistoma*. Michaelsen (1930, p. 489) designated *Distoma rubrum* Savigny, 1816 (p. 177) as the type species of *Eudistoma*.

3. Michaelsen (1907, p. 68) proposed the genus *Paessleria* for the new single species (and single specimen) *P. magalhaensis* (p. 69) from the Straits of Magellan. Caullery (1909) overlooked *Paessleria*. Michaelsen (1915) briefly mentioned the name again, and in 1930 he allocated specimens from the Red Sea, Seychelles and southwestern Australia to *P. magalhaensis* and published (p. 489) a revised diagnosis. Van Name (1945, p. 132) and Kott (1969, p. 40) doubted that this specific synonymy was correct. No nominal species other than *P. magalhaensis* has ever been placed in

Paessleria, and indeed no new material of the species from the original region has been studied.

4. No author has used *Paessleria* as a senior synonym of *Eudistoma* Caullery, 1909, which has been in continuous wide use either as a genus or (incorrectly) as a subgenus of *Polycitor* or of *Sigillina* Savigny, 1816 (p. 40). Michaelsen himself (1930) treated *Eudistoma* and *Paessleria* as separate subgenera of *Sigillina*. *Eudistoma* is the name applied to at least 75 species; 39 of these are from Australia and the West Pacific, and others come from waters around North and South America, Africa and Japan, and also the Mediterranean. I have given the Commission Secretariat a list of 73 references by 23 authors which use *Eudistoma*; the major reviews are Van Name (1945), Millar (1962, 1977), Tokioka (1967), Nishikawa (1984) and Kott (1990).

5. The name *Eudistoma* denotes a well defined taxon, although the individual species are very difficult to characterise (especially if records are not kept of the colour and general appearance of living colonies). There is no doubt that Michaelsen's *P. magalhaensis* belongs to *Eudistoma*; however, some *Eudistoma* species fall into groups in which particular characters are shared, suggesting a possible close relationship. One such group (Kott, 1990, p. 192) may include *magalhaensis* and at least three other species, and this is an argument for not suppressing the almost unused name *Paessleria* so that it can remain available for possible use for a subgenus.

6. *Paessleria* Michaelsen, 1907 is a senior subjective synonym of *Eudistoma* Caullery, 1909, but except when mentioning the little known *P. magalhaensis* authors have used only the latter generic name. All the many other species have been first described in *Eudistoma*.

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to give precedence to the name *Eudistoma* Caullery, 1909 over the name *Paessleria* Michaelsen, 1907 whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *Eudistoma* Caullery, 1909 (gender: neuter), type species by designation by Michaelsen (1930) *Distoma rubrum* Savigny, 1816, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over *Paessleria* Michaelsen, 1907 whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms;
 - (b) *Paessleria* Michaelsen, 1907 (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy *Paessleria magalhaensis* Michaelsen, 1907, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over *Eudistoma* Caullery, 1909 whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *rubrum* Savigny, 1816, as published in the binomen *Distoma rubrum* (specific name of the type species of *Eudistoma* Caullery, 1909);
 - (b) *magalhaensis* Michaelsen, 1907, as published in the binomen *Paessleria magalhaensis* (specific name of the type species of *Paessleria* Michaelsen, 1907).

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